

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Examiner's Action mailed October 6, 2004, with a shortened statutory period of three months set to expire January 6, 2005. Claims 1-27 are currently pending. With this amendment, claims 1, 2, 13, 16, and 17 have been amended.

The Examiner objected to the specification because of informalities in the Abstract. The parentheses in the Abstract have been removed. Therefore, this objection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner objected to claims 2, 13, and 17 because of informalities. These claims have been amended to correct the typographical errors. Therefore, these objections should be withdrawn.

Applicants have amended the claims to describe the first latch having more than a predetermined particular positive slack period. The second latch has more than a zero slack period but less than the particular slack period of the first latch. The first latch consumes a first amount of power. The availability of a second latch is determined that consumes a second amount of power. The second amount of power consumed by the second latch is less than the first amount of power consumed by the first latch. One example of support for this amendment can be found in the specification on page 3, lines 4-15, page 5, lines 4-19, and page 8, lines 20-24.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,426,591 issued to *Ginetti* in view of U.S. Patent 6,425,110 issued to *Hathaway*. This rejection, as it might be applied to the claims as amended, is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner states that *Ginetti* teaches improving circuit timing performance which affects power consumption but does not teach the use of clock buffers. The Examiner relies on *Hathaway* to teach the features missing from *Ginetti*. The Examiner states that *Hathaway* teaches improving circuit timing performance which affects power consumption and includes a method which deals with cell power levels and drive strengths.

Ginetti teaches identifying an output node that has the most negative slack value as the critical node. Column 3, lines 39-40. The circuit is modified to substitute a cell with another cell that improves the timing performance of the circuit. This process is repeated until the circuit meets all timing constraints. *Ginetti* teaches that substitute cells can be identified for purposes of reducing power consumption.

Ginetti does not teach locating a latch having more than a predetermined positive slack period. *Ginetti* teaches that cells with negative slacks are identified.

Further, *Ginetti* does not teach identifying a latch that has more than a particular slack period. *Ginetti* teaches merely that the cell having the most negative slack is identified. The most negative slack is not a particular value.

Applicants have amended the claims to describe the second latch having a more than zero slack period and less than the particular slack period of the first latch. *Ginetti* does not teach this feature.

Hathaway teaches improving the circuit timing of a circuit by improving the cells with the worst slack period. *Hathaway* does not teach locating a latch having more than a predetermined positive slack period. *Hathaway* teaches that cells with negative slacks are identified. Further, *Hathaway* does not teach identifying a latch that has more than a particular slack period. *Hathaway* teaches merely that the cell having the most negative slack is identified. The most negative slack is not a particular slack period.

Ginetti teaches improving the nodes with the worst slack period by increasing the slack. *Hathaway* teaches improving the cells with the worst slack period. The worst slack period is defined as the worst negative slack. See Column 16, lines 30-32. Thus, *Hathaway* teaches increasing the slack period for a selected cell.

Applicants claim reducing the slack period. Applicants claim the second latch having more than a zero slack period and less than the particular slack period of the first latch. Neither *Ginetti* nor *Hathaway* teaches reducing the slack period. Both references teach increasing the slack. Therefore, *Ginetti* and *Hathaway* both teach away from Applicants' claims.

The combination of *Ginetti* and *Hathaway* does not describe, teach, or suggest the first latch having more than a predetermined particular positive slack period, the second latch having more than a zero slack period but less than the particular slack period of the

first latch, the first latch consuming a first amount of power, the availability of a second latch being determined that consumes a second amount of power, and the second amount of power consumed by the second latch being less than the first amount of power consumed by the first latch. Therefore, the combination of the cited prior art does not render Applicants' claims unpatentable.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the Examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

DATE: 01.05.05

Respectfully submitted,

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